

VZCZCXRO6186
RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHTRO
DE RUEHDS #2017 2311317
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 191317Z AUG 09
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5925
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 002017

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/RSA, AF/S, AND AF/C

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/18/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: CHARGE CALLS ON AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION CHAIR PING

Classified By: CDA Roger Meece, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) In his first visit to the African Union as CDA for the bilateral mission and USAU, Ambassador Meece met with AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping and reaffirmed USG interest in deepening ties with the continental organization. U.S. interest in Africa is growing, the CDA told Ping, citing the Secretary's recent multi-country tour in Africa and President Obama's earlier speech in Ghana. For his part, Ping said he fully intends to reinforce exchanges with Washington, reiterating his intention to conduct at least two official visits to the United States each year, beginning with the UN General Assembly and following up with a visit to Washington in the spring.

¶2. (C) Turning to the upcoming election in Gabon, Ping's country of origin, the AUC Chairperson confided that the AU is "concerned" about how his fellow citizens will respond, particularly in the post-election period. He informed the CDA that the AU will send Senegalese politician and diplomat Mustapha Niasse to Gabon on a preventive diplomacy mission on August 24. "There is a risk of violence," Ping said. "Regardless of who wins, there will be a challenge." The AU already has a pre-election assessment team on the ground, and it will be sending an observer mission for the August 30 election. Ping assessed that if the election goes well, it will be a model of transition that other African states can follow. Ping and the CDA both noted a trend of successful elections in Africa and expressed optimism that this trend would continue.

¶3. (C) On Zimbabwe, there was agreement that the country's economy had been severely damaged in recent years, and Ping expressed optimism about the country emerging from its political crisis. Prime Minister Tsvangirai will eventually take power, he predicted. The only reason President Mugabe has remained in power is that his advisers have urged him to do so to protect their own interests, he assessed.

¶4. (SBU) The CDA also informed Ping of USAU Ambassador Michael Battle's anticipated mid-September arrival in Addis Ababa. The introductory call in Ping's office was also an opportunity to briefly review a meeting that Ping will have on August 20 with USAFRICOM Commander General Ward, and a still-unconfirmed meeting on August 22 with Special Envoy for Sudan Gration.
MEECE